

# THE F.I.C. AROUND THE WORLD

## CHILE. BOLIVIA. ARGENTINA . Christmas 2007

### Christmas 2007

In Bolivia, schools close in the first half of December, and in Chile, in the second half. Another difference is that in Chile there are in January formation activities, holiday camps with the children and the youths engaged in pastoral activities, as well as missions organised by Brothers and catechists.

In the last few years, the communities of Bolivia (El Alto, and San Borja) have taken to travel to Chile to join the communities there (Llay-Llay, Santiago and Culipran) and spend Christmas together with them, do the annual retreat and, during a day or two, exchange on questions of common interest and plan for the coming year.

In spite of the long distances, as in the time of the Founder these are long anticipated moments of community relaxation, of animation and of a re-reading of life. It is a time to revise our Mennaisian community projects. From San Borja to Santiago it is a three-day journey by bus, starting from the tropic, climbing the high Bolivian plateaus, then crossing the Atacama desert of northern Chile and finally reaching the fertile land of central Chile where Santiago and Culipran are found.

This year, invited by the community of Lujan de Cuyo (Mendoza, Argentina) we went



there to celebrate the night and the feast of Christmas. We were fourteen Brothers from Chile and Bolivia and were joined by two Argentine Brothers, Juan Alberto and Juan Maydana for a fraternal international Christmas.

### The annual retreat

After a few days of rest for some, and of preparing courses for others, we began our annual retreat under Br Miguel Angel Merino, first assistant, at a retreat house not far from our Chilean communities; the theme, >the experience of God and the mission=, was enriched by thoughts from our Founder...

For this retreat, we were joined for the first two or three days by lay persons engaged in the shared mission. Br Justino Santiago, the provincial of Spain, Bolivia and Chile, was with us;

that was his second visit of the communities this year and he took it as an occasion for consultations in view of the composition of the communities for the year 2008.

At the end of the retreat we spent one day having a look, with the participation of the lay persons, at the ground covered in the shared mission. We evaluated the progress made in our two projects for the past year:

1. Strengthening the elements of formation for the shared mission by making clearer the various levels of engagement.
2. Strengthening the links of communion and of participation between Brothers and lay people (with an option for the educators working in our centres).



*Brothers visiting Mendoza (Argentina)*



*Brothers and Lay persons during the retreat*

After considering our progress in this realm, we expressed our desires and our needs for an advance on the path of the shared mission in 2008.

Two other days were spent on reflecting on our personal and community situations. Br Justino,

provincial, presented to us the orientations of the Province for the community project of the new year. We studied some themes and a few areas of common interest such as the orientations of the General Council presented by Br Miguel Angel Merino.

Thus ended our Mennaisian community meetings of the Spanish province in the Southern Cone of America.

*Comunidad de San Borja (Bolivia).*

## The 50 Years of the Seiko Gakuin College of Yokohama

**A**FTER THE KINDERGARTEN, two years ago, it is the moment for the Seiko Gakuin College of Yokohama to feast its 50th Anniversary.

Regardless of the depleted number of Brothers, Seiko Gakuin continues to maintain its excellent reputation thanks to a very professional lay staff and an educational climate impregnated with evangelical values.

Concerts have mainly marked the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the school. The grand finale was a magnificent interpretation of the 9th Beethoven's Symphony by 500 choristers and musicians composed of students, former students and friends of the school, in the presence of Brother Yannick Houssay, Superior General.



*For its 50th anniversary the College is adorned with spring flowers*